

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and young people in out-of-home care presenting at a specialist child and youth mental health service

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Little evaluation research has been conducted on the effectiveness of services and intervention provided to Indigenous children in out-of-home care. This study evaluated Evolve Therapeutic Services, an innovative Queensland, Australia program employing a collaborative wrap-round model of care in combination with a flexible intervention approach, individually tailored to children and young people in out-of-home care presenting with complex and extreme behavioural and mental health problems.

The sample consisted of 768 children and young people, of which 36% were Indigenous. Two clinician-rated measures, the Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS) and Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Children and Adolescents (HoNOSCA), were used to assess young people's functioning via a pre-post treatment design. Differences in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous consumers were assessed by comparing pre and post treatment CGAS and HoNOSCA mean scores using repeated-measures t-tests. For estimates of differences in the proportion of clients in the clinical range between pre and post-treatment the McNemar test was used.

Results provide a demographic profile, clinical profile, and pre and post treatment comparisons for Indigenous and non-Indigenous consumers. Results will be outlined across a range of problems areas: general functioning and adjustment; disruptive, antisocial and aggressive behaviour; overactivity, poor attention and concentration; problems with scholastic and language skills; emotional symptoms; peer and family relationships; self-care and independence; and school attendance.

Practical implications of the findings will be discussed.

Keywords: indigenous; out-of-home care; children; mental health; outcomes
